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ABSTRACT

Each of the 50 states has created a state library agency to administer state and federal library programs. Since the 1960's state library agencies have been involved in bibliographical systems and networks. In the 1970's these agencies completed long-range plans to meet each state's library service needs. Because of this experience, the state library agencies are the natural coordinators for carrying out any national program for library and information services. The state library agency is best able to work in partnership with the information community and all types of libraries in a state and national framework. Lists of changes needed to support the National Program for Library and Information Services, problems anticipated in its development, and criteria for new federal legislation conclude the paper. (Author/PF)

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RELATIONSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES WITH THE NATIONAL PROGRAM PROPOSED BY NCLIS

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Describes the relationship and involvement of the state library and information community with the national program as described in the second draft of the NCLIS program document. It projects the tole of the state library in effecting a compatibility between state library planning and developments and the national program. Attention is given to changes needed in present programs, new programs required, types of standards desirable, new qualifications for personnel, and anticipated problems in developing this relationship.

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RELATIONSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT
OF THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES WITH THE NATIONAL PROGRAM
PROPOSED BY NCLIS

by

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Each of the fifty state governments has created a State Library Agency. Though their powers differ, depending on laws and needs of the states, a common power to all is that of administering state and federal library programs.

State Library Agencies have been recognized by the Federal Government as the natural focus for statewide planning of cooperative library and information services and should be the coordinating force for future statewide and national library programs with the Federal Government.

State Library Agencies have become a major force in the library profession only in the last 20-25 years. Many State Libraries were established in the last century, concerning themselves mostly with services to state government and extension of public library development.

By the 1930's, state aid was available in a number of states and State Library Agencies were charged with the administration of state aid monies for public libraries. This early responsibility for the administration and distribution of public funds on behalf of local public libraries became a model for the later responsibility to administer federal funds for libraries.

In addition to administering public funds for public libraries, most states late in this period enacted a body of state laws from which regulations were written to provide some or all of these functions or goals:

1. Development of short- and long-range plans and coordination of a variety of library activities.

2. Studies of existing or needed user services.

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3. Provision of expert aid through consultants, either within the agency or hired specifically for such purposes.

4. Establishment of improved communications for the library community in a state and maintenance of a clearinghouse function on library matters including statistical programs.

5. Development of continuing education training programs of a varied nature.

6. Promotion of local library interests and activities and evaluation of library development within the state.

7. Development of minimum standards for services, local financial support and personnel, usually in connection with state aid.

8. Provision of specific public services -- e.g., talking book services to the blind, etc.

9. Encouragement of and support for intra-state interlibrary bibliographic and interlibrary loan networks.

10. Administration of interstate library compacts.

The Library Services Act of 1956 and Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act of 1964, administered by State Library Agencies, have provided funds to establish public libraries or to assist existing public libraries in serving their communities. Programs funded by LSA and LSCA stimulated greater local support for library services. In addition, federal aid was instrumental in the strengthening of State Library Agencies to administer the programs.

Title II of the Library Services and Construction Act has provided funds for construction of local public library buildings or expansion of such facilities.

The LSCA Amendments of 1966 introduced Title III of the Library Services and Construction Act, known as Interlibrary Cooperation. Title III acted as further incentive for sharing resources between and among the various types of libraries: public, academic, special and school. It is a credit to the planning and development programs of State Library Agencies that several states had already developed statewide networks of sharing resources among types of libraries prior to the 1966 Amendments.

Though never adequately funded, the Title III provisions (along with Title I of LSCA) provided added impetus to the states for the further development of statewide library networks for sharing resources among types of libraries. These networks, which involve metropolitan public

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libraries, state universities, state libraries, schools and college libraries, provide materials and information to citizens through their local libraries. Through this service, cooperative relationships have developed between staffs of various sizes and types of libraries, as well as contractual relationships providing for services between institutions.

Title III also allowed many state library agencies to share funds across state lines in establishing bibliographical systems and networks.

State Libraries in the 1970's

The Library Services and Construction Act of 1970 mandated five-year long-range programs identifying the library needs of all the people of the state and indicating activities to be taken to fulfill those needs. Many State Library Agencies had carried out considerable planning and evaluation of library needs prior to this time. However, the United States Office of Education in 1971-72 held planning and evaluation workshops for all State Library Agency directors and staff in order to assure consistency in the development of such long-range programs. The effect of meeting together to discuss planning and evaluation of library programs assisted all state agencies in revising their present plans or developing new ones.

This strengthened the State Library Agencies' ability to plan and evaluate programs and, in conjunction with local libraries, to serve the informational needs of all the citizens of each state.

Organizationally, State Library Agencies may exist as independent governmental agencies, sections of Departments of Education, Departments of Higher Education, Departments of Cultural Affairs, or the Office of Secretary of State.

The long-range program requirements of the 1970 Act include active State Advisory Councils representing all types of libraries and users. These councils function in various ways depending upon state programs, with some meeting quite regularly to make recommendations on proposals requiring federal funding, and others overlapping with statutory bodies having specific responsibilities.

Federal matching grants have helped encourage an increase in state aid to local public libraries. At least 37 states now provide state aid of some type and 28 of these provide more than the basic $200,000 allocation under LSCA Title I.

Network development is quite advanced in several states, as indicated in the National Commission's 2nd Draft Program. A recent study indicates that intertype library networks are widespread throughout the nation and that the state library agency has played a strong leadership role in the development of networks.

* "Public Libraries and Networks: Results of OE Study."
In Library Journal, October 1, 1974, p. 2438.

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The public libraries, either independently or in organizational patterns such as systems, have been the nucleus for statewide networks. Major metropolitan libraries and university libraries, as well as State Library Agencies, have served as resource centers, or back-up collections, to supplement local needs. The involvement of academic, special and school libraries has been natural, often based on location and specific clientele. Most users have access to several libraries, depending upon place of residence, age, and occupation. The development of intertype library networks at all levels in a state is the natural outgrowth of the necessity of sharing local resources first and being sure that needed information or materials are not available in a particular locality before a wider search is made. Locally, all types of libraries cooperating together locally would ensure that local resources were regularly checked, when necessary, before access would be sought in a statewide network or a national network.

This involvement of State Library Agencies with other types of libraries provides the framework for working with the Federal Government in any future development of a national program. The informational services provided at the local level (stimulated by monies at the local, state and federal level) must be interrelated with any discussion of network development at the state, multistate and national level. One cannot occur without the other.

In some states, the existing state library agency is weak and ineffective because of its legal foundation, its funding, its staffing, or a combination of some or all of these factors. In addition, fragmentation of the library responsibility in many states is unfortunate; however, State Library Agencies, inadequate as some of them are, have the greatest concentration of the skills required in the organizational and coordinating task of implementing a total national library information program. Their experience in library development and cooperation at the state and local level as well as their participation at the multistate level make them the logical nodes in a national program involving networks. It will be a lot easier to work with an existing agency in a state to make that agency more effective than it will be to try to create a new agency at the state level. Government bodies now frown on establishing new agencies and the trend at the state level has been consolidation of existing governmental agencies.

The role of the state library agency in the state legislative process, in achieving support for statewide library and information services, will be crucial to library development and coordination with a national program. Many state library agencies are actively involved in the political process at the state level, in providing information services to legislators and government officials, as well as the libraries in the state, and showing by example what library service truly can be. Many state library agency heads report directly to governors or other elected officials and wield considerable influence both at the state and federal level. Their advice is often sought on support for all types of libraries, at both the state and federal level, because they are visible in the eyes of governmental officials as spokesmen for libraries.

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In carrying out any national program for library and information services, the states are the natural building blocks and the state library agencies the natural coordinators. Building on the present framework, which is the basis for organization of other educational services, is more likely to quickly achieve the kind of national program needed to ensure that all citizens of the United States have access to needed informational services.

LSCA funding has provided the extra monies needed to begin new programs and strengthen existing ones. The development of any national program will need to include federal funding for the continual strengthening of State Library Agencies and the support of statewide programs designed to interface with a national program.

Multistate library networks now exist in various parts of the country organized to carry out specific functions. These networks are logical extensions of the states making up their organization. Many are based on state support with additional support from federal funds. Title III of the Library Services and Construction Act has enabled some of these networks to expand their services to member states.

Examples of multistate library networks are the Southwestern Library Interstate Cooperative Endeavor (SLICE), Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET), New England Library Information Network (NELINET), New England Interstate Library District, Pacific Northwest Bibliographical Center (PNBC), and the Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region.

The latter two bibliographical networks have been in existence since the 1930's and exist in areas of the country with low population density and scarce resources spread over a large geographical area.

Multistate library networks also exist in areas where there is a high population density and many resources within a small geographical area. For example, the New England Interstate Library District was created by an Interstate Library Compact approved by all six New England States. A library board consisting of the six New England State Library Agency heads governs the network. One of its first activities has been to set up and operate a Document Conservation Center to restore, preserve and maintain materials of historical, archival or cultural interest.

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These examples show that some states feel a necessity to establish multistate library networks for common functions that may cut across state lines. State governments have supported this type of activity as has the Federal government. With adequate financial support from both the state and Federal level, multistate library networks can provide needed services to libraries at reduced costs, establish standards, develop continuing education programs and meet together to determine additional needs necessary for local libraries in the multistate area to be able to meet the needs of their users.

Information Community and State Library Agencies

The Information Community, as the term is used by the National Commission, is that part of the private sector comprising publishers, indexing and abstracting services, the data base industry, information analysis centers, the audiovisual industry, reprint companies, information subscription agencies and on-line computer retrieval services, among others. These information services activities are provided usually for a fee or a specific charge.

There should be a closer relationship between this private sector and the State Library Agencies. The Information Community should be involved in the planning process at the state level. Representation should be provided on statewide library councils to foster closer coordination. Though organizationally and philosophically there may be differences, a positive attitude toward working together on mutual problems will achieve greater results, will benefit citizens, and will assist in working out the so-called insoluble problems. In any case, both groups have much to offer each other in areas of expertise, service attitude, and philosophy. Most important, the consumers of services from both groups are the same -- citizens needing and seeking information for a variety of individual purposes.

Changes Needed

Even though the framework is available for a national program for library and information services, the parts of the framework are not all developed to the same extent. Changes can be brought about by cooperation among the National Commission, State Library Agencies and representatives from all types of libraries and the private sector. Many of the states still need support for basic ongoing services that have not been funded at the state or local level for a variety of reasons. All states will need assistance in varrying degrees and at different levels, so that any national library program can be effective and can benefit the citizens of each state. There are several changes that can be listed, such a list does not exhaust the possibilities:

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1. A definition will be needed of the states' responsibilities in such areas as financial obligations, legal commitments, matching formulae, and minimum requirements under a national program.

2. In some states, it will be necessary to update and strengthen state legislation, to enable the state agencies to coordinate the responsibilities assigned to the states under a national program. Such legislation should firmly establish the authority of State Library Agencies with regard to the development, coordination, and evaluation of intertype library programs.

3. Strong state and federal financial support for the strengthening of State Library Agencies should be stipulated.

4. Development and/or revision of both service and technological standards, to reflect current and future state library responsibilities and to ensure compatibility with national programs, should be undertaken.

5. To assure adequate personnel, there is a need to study and perhaps determine new qualifications for personnel working at the state library agency level. There is also a need for development of a comprehensive statewide continuing education program to include personnel and trustees, at all levels and among all types of libraries. This should result in a clearer understanding of the national program and in improved services to users at their local access point to any national program -- their primary library.

6. Implementation and funding of cooperative programs among all types of libraries, both intra- and interstate, should be outlined.

7. Closer coordination with urban and research libraries to work out mutual problems and to plan for the needs of their clienteles, must be encouraged.

8. There should be greater use of contracts, agreements, and compacts in developing and extending services and creating multistate networks of all types to meet the informational, recreational and educational needs of all the people of the states.

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9. Formal relationships with representatives of the private sector in states and regional areas should be inaugurated, in order to involve these persons in the development of library and information programs and to take advantage of their expertise and services.

Problems Anticipated

Even as we work toward changes that are needed, it is vital that problems be anticipated and identified. No national program of the scope envisioned by the National Commission will be without problems; however, working together and with a positive attitude, most of these problems can be overcome.

1. There will be difficulty in changing the "public library oriented" image of State Library Agencies which is prevalent among many non-public librarians and citizens. Mutual trust and assistance by all are required to overcome this fallacy.

2. There is a lack of financial support in some states for ongoing basic operations of the State Library Agency. Federal incentive funding should include a firm obligation of continuing support with state funds. State Library Agencies will need to persuade state government leaders across the nation that state support is vital.

3. Interfacing with existing and developing networks, such as medical and various state and multistate networks, must be planned.

4. Federal incentive financial support, for libraries needing assistance in order to reach appropriate levels of development, must be provided at both the local and state level for participants in a national program.

5. Resistance to change is found in most social organizations.

6. Differences in levels of development, and in state administrative patterns, must be recognized.

7. Multistate library networks are now in existence and will be necessary in the future. There may be disagreements over the specifics of funding of such networks, if not over their purpose; however, funding needs to include state involvement and appropriations along with federal monies designated to the states for such endeavors. The state library agencies which are vital participants should have some degree of authority and responsibility for the management of these networks.

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6. Any past "non-cooperative" tradition among professional organizations, representing various interests within the library and information science community, must be overcome.

Criteria for Federal Legislation

The total library and information community is presently involved in developing a posture toward future federal legislation. We believe that the following criteria should be contained in any future federal legislation:

1. Federal assistance and incentives should work toward a more efficient and effective use of existing resources and services -- federal, state and local -- irrespective of type of library.

2. Federal assistance and incentives should elicit increased and broadened state and local support of library services, and a more rational system of organization and support.

3. Federal and state funds are needed for additional resources and services as well as for networks aimed at improved use of existing resources.

4. Federal support is needed to provide financial and other incentives to the states to enable them to achieve effective use of computers and other technology that will interface with a national network.

The State Library Agency is responsible for keeping the total needs of all citizens of the State in perspective, not just a local area, or specific interest group, or specific type of library. The fact that many State Library Agencies actively cooperate with academic, special and school libraries, as well as public libraries should guarantee that citizens anywhere will have access to their informational needs through whatever library is convenient to them at the local level.

The concept of a National Program for Library and Information Services is more than just networks. In addition to sharing resources, programs are needed to provide continuing education opportunities for present personnel and training for new personnel. Stimulation of new and innovative service programs to reach present non-users of libraries, specialized clientele of libraries, and the development of more efficient delivery systems of information and materials to users, are also needed. Federal monies through the successfully proven concept of categorical aid will assist in seeing that these additional services are provided.

As a state agency with statewide responsibilities, the State Library is best able to work in partnership with the information community and all types of libraries in a state and national framework.